

SENATE COMMITTEE ON FACULTY AFFAIRS (SCFA)

October 13, 2015

Minutes of the meeting

[These minutes reflect discussion and debate at a meeting of a committee of the University of Minnesota Senate; none of the comments, conclusions or actions reported in these minutes represent the views of, nor are they binding on, the Senate, the Administration, or the Board of Regents.]

[In these minutes: Realignment of Institutional Support for Graduate and Professional Education; Revocation of UPass for Postdoctoral Associates; 25% Rule for Academic Appointments with Teaching Functions; Review of SCFA by Committee on Committees]

PRESENT: Scott Lanyon (chair), Joe Price, Allen Levine, Theodor Litman, Christine Blue, Tabitha Grier-Reed, Joseph Konstan, Robert Kudrle, Monica Luciana, Peh Ng, Lori Rhudy, Geoff Rojas, Samuel Stern

REGRETS: Christina Bourland, Phil Buhlmann, Teresa Kimberley, Teri Caraway, Juanjuan Wu, Aks Zaheer, Leah Reinert

ABSENT: Kathy Brown, Ken Horstman, Sophia Gladding, Ruth Okediji

GUESTS: Provost Karen Hanson, Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education Henning Schroeder, Professor Ingrid Schneider representing Committee on Committees

OTHERS ATTENDING: Assistant to the Provost Emily Ronning

1. **Call to order:** Professor Lanyon convened the meeting, welcomed those present and called for a round of introductions.

2. **Realignment of institutional support for graduate and professional education:** Professor Lanyon welcomed Provost Hanson and Vice Provost and Dean of Graduate Education Schroeder who were invited to talk about the recent announcement concerning the realignment of institutional support for graduate and professional education.

Provost Hanson recalled that even before she started in her position at the University, a number of people were upset about changes that had been made in the administrative support for graduate and professional education. She said while it has taken some time, she is proposing a new model for realigning the University's institutional support for graduate and professional education. As currently structured, there are no clear distinctions between the graduate/research degrees and the various professional degrees, particularly as one thinks about how academic careers are changing.

The details of the new model, noted Provost Hanson, have been informed by numerous conversations and analyses as well as by the work of the Special Committee on Graduate Education

(http://www.academic.umn.edu/provost/graduate/2013_Special_Committee_on_GraduateEducation-Final_Report.pdf). She reported that she and Vice Provost Schroeder have been consulting

with the schools, e.g., staff and the deans, and will continue these discussions as the administrative support services are being shaped for graduate and professional degrees. This is a work in progress. Vice Provost Schroeder added that by making more visible the different programs, which have different goals and values, the University will be in a better position to advocate for why it offers research PhDs and Master's programs as well as professional programs and what they contribute to the institution and society. By putting all these programs under one umbrella, it is not clear to many people the value of all these degrees. Professor Lanyon said that outside of academia to many people graduate degrees mean Medical School and Law School, for example, and he believes it will help with communication, especially with Minnesota citizens and the legislature.

Referring to an earlier comment by Provost Hanson about the lack clear distinctions between graduate/research degrees and professional degrees, asked Professor Lanyon, what are the challenges facing graduate education as it evolves to meet the needs of society? Provost Hanson said the University needs to remain attentive to what is happening on the ground in each of the colleges. Every degree needs to be housed somewhere. The reason the distinctions are not clear is because there is a research component in advanced education and training. Provost Hanson said she does not worry about things falling through the cracks because every effort will be made to work closely with the colleges to make sure programs are placed appropriately.

Professor Konstan asked about the downstream budget model impact the new model will have on departments/programs. There has been a long simmering discontent among some professional programs about the way the cost pools work. In his opinion, this money has been appropriately yet disproportionately dispensed to support PhD students and programs. Going forward, under the new model, there will presumably be pressure to have two separate cost pools. If this is the case, it would be to the detriment of graduate education programs, particularly the PhD programs. What is being done to prevent this from happening, or anticipate it and reallocate the subsidy from another source? Provost Hanson said there is nothing inherently in the new model where there would be less support for PhD programs. It is true that there have been complaints about people putting into cost pools who feel they do not benefit from doing so. The notion of a cost pool does not mean that what is paid in will necessarily come out under the same terms otherwise there would have been no reason to pool the money in the first place. In the beginning, everyone will be held harmless; however, if it turns out that there are different economies related to the production of certain research Master's and PhDs, this will be addressed openly as an institution. The new model will be more transparent, and, if decisions are made that involve taking campus funds as a whole, and putting them in the direction of the research degrees then so be it (but it will be obvious). Vice Provost Schroeder said he believes it is in the best interest of the institution to get away from looking at the cost pools as an investment tool.

Professor Blue asked for clarification on the organizational structure of the Graduate School, which she has been told does not really exist. Vice Provost Schroeder explained that the Graduate School used to be a collegiate unit where students and their records were housed. Over time, the Graduate School became more of an oversight office, but the name Graduate School remained. The Graduate School is the policy owner of 14 new graduate education policies that span the entire post-baccalaureate universe at the University, but the notion that students are in the Graduate School is no longer true. Instead, graduate students are in their respective college

where their academic dean and faculty have more control over their program than was the case before 2010. To be clear, while the Graduate School still exists, it is no longer a collegiate unit. Vice Provost Schroeder commented that it is important to recognize that even if distinct research and professional programs are created, there will be no research-free professional programs. The University of Minnesota is a research university and its professional programs are ranked highly because they are in a research environment.

Professor Lanyon recalled that the reason the research and professional programs were combined originally was because of the commonalities they shared. Has any thought been given to not creating resources in parallel if synergies already exist? Vice Provost Schroeder said the emerging structure would not be in competition with the Graduate School. Instead, it will be an efficient, synergistic enterprise. Every effort will be made to avoid duplication, said Vice Provost Schroeder.

What is the relationship between postdocs and the Graduate School, asked Professor Lanyon? Vice Provost Schroeder explained that when he started in 2010, postdocs were under the umbrella of the Office of the Vice President for Research, but this recently changed and the University has gone back to the model of postdocs being under the auspices of the Graduate School. Geoff Rojas, a postdoc on SCFA, said in conversations with other postdocs, they feel they are completely dependent on the Graduate School now for any resources they get. Despite numerous communications about where postdocs fit into the structure, said Professor Lanyon, there remains a lot of confusion among faculty.

Professor Konstan commented that this seems like a good opportunity to reinforce the message that there is one Provost's Office. He said he was at a meeting recently where the discussion came up that the University does not do a good job of tracking outcomes such as alumni and what they are doing. If the University can factor out some of its common services, it will strengthen its ability to do things that cut across the institution.

Hearing no further questions, Professor Lanyon asked Provost Hanson and Vice Provost Schroeder if there is anything the committee can do to help with this effort. Vice Provost Schroeder said once the accreditation process is complete, he will be meeting with every college to start the sorting out process. He said while he does not have specific items that SCFA can help with at this time, undoubtedly there will be in the future.

Professor Lanyon thanked Provost Hanson and Vice Provost Schroeder for attending today's meeting on short notice.

3. Update on revocation of UPass access for postdoctoral associates: Professor Lanyon said it had been brought to his attention that UPass access had been revoked for postdocs, but was happy to report that this issue has since been resolved. He turned to Geoff Rojas, a post doc on the committee, to provide more information. Mr. Rojas said that based on a meeting with Ross Allanson, director, Parking & Transportation, the problem resulted from the recent PeopleSoft upgrade. The upgrade also led to other software and access issues for postdocs as well. While the decision has been made to give postdocs UPass access again, it is unclear how this will be possible because postdocs do not have the necessary access to register for UPass or the tab for

paying bills. Professor Lanyon summarized by saying UPass access is a benefit postdocs are eligible for, but they just cannot get to it. Professor Lanyon asked Mr. Rojas to keep SCFA in the loop on this and any related issues, and, if at any point, it would be necessary to involve SCFA, to let him know.

Professor Konstan said while he does not want to turn this matter into an information technology problem, something like this recurs every year, and it recurs because the University's system is not coded properly. While the University has a notion of a student in its system, somehow the system has not been coded to have a notion of a postdoc that could span across whether they are a post doctoral fellow or associate, or other categories in which people who are postdocs are paid. SCFA should push to make sure all human resource systems can identify all postdocs and use that as a classification for disbursing benefits, the way it is done with undergraduate students.

Mr. Rojas noted that postdoc associates are classified as employees whereas fellows, residents, graduate teaching assistants, for example, are technically not employees. As a result, for certain benefits, postdoc associates are classified as students and for other benefits they are classified as employees. This an issue with software such as GoldPASS, which does not allow postdocs to classify themselves as students, said Mr. Rojas, and this is a problem that needs to be addressed. He added that he spoke with someone in Information Technology (IT) and was told him that postdocs fall into a category that is somewhere between an employee and graduate student; the person said it would be an ongoing problem.

Professor Lanyon asked Vice Provost Levine who the committee could talk to about this issue, and Vice Provost Levine suggested the ESUP Committee/Vice Provost McMaster. Professor Lanyon said he would email Vice Provost McMaster about this matter. Mr. Rojas requested to be copied on the message Professor Lanyon was going to send Vice Provost McMaster to which Professor Lanyon agreed. Mr. Rojas said he would report that SCFA discussed this issue at the next Postdoctoral Association meeting.

4. 25% Rule for Academic Appointments with Teaching Functions and Review of SCFA by Committee on Committees: Professor Lanyon welcomed Professor Ingrid Schneider from Committee on Committees (ConC) and noted that she will be soliciting member input to get a sense of how members think the committee is functioning as part of the ConC periodic committee review process. Before beginning, Professor Lanyon called for another round of introductions. Following introductions, Professor Schneider provided the committee with a brief overview of the process and reported that five Senate committees are being reviewed this year (SCFA, SCSA, Social Concerns, ACA, FAOCIA). With that said, Professor Schneider asked if the committee would be willing to wait a few minutes to begin to see if her ConC colleague, Professor Ben Clarke, would be joining the meeting as well.

While waiting for Professor Clarke, Professor Lanyon took a few minutes to talk about the joint subcommittee that Academic Freedom & Tenure (AF&T) is spearheading in concert with a couple members from SCFA to look at the 25% rule for academic appointments with teaching functions. He said of the people who fall in this category, he is particularly concerned about individuals who really want faculty jobs, and are doing contract teaching work in the interim. Professor Lanyon asked members for their thoughts.

Professor Konstan noted that there seems to be two different goals behind the policy, and he believes the University should be thinking about the policy in terms of how it can protect the people it is employing. Professor Konstan cited a fictitious example to make his point, which was that departments that can support having a large number of courses, should have more tenure and tenure-track faculty.

Professor Rhudy said regarding clinical track faculty in the School of Nursing, in order to be certified in a clinical specialty, which is required for students to be able sit for certification (e.g., nurse practitioner), it would not be possible to have research responsibilities on top of their clinical practice requirements. It is not just teaching that contract (non-tenure/non-tenure track) faculty are involved in; many are heavily engaged in scholarship, but because of their role and professional requirements, tenure track is not an option.

Professor Lanyon said Professors Konstan and Rhudy's points are compatible, but what he is interested in discussing is within the 25%, what does the University want to accomplish? In some programs, noted Professor Konstan, it could be perfectly appropriate to have over 25% contract faculty, but it should not be higher simply because a program hires faculty who are aspiring to be faculty-like and deny them a chance at tenure track.

In light of time, the committee returned to the ConC review discussion. Professor Schneider explained that at the conclusion of the review, ConC would write up a report and send it to the committee to make sure it accurately reflects today's discussion. She began by asking members if the committee's charge accurately reflects the work it does, and members agreed that it does. Professor Konstan added that SCFA has also adopted concerns facing postdoctoral associates, and this should be articulated somewhere in the charge. Mr. Rojas said that it would be helpful if SCFA addressed postdoctoral associates' issues because even though they are technically P&A employees (professionals in training who will only be at the University a maximum of five years), they are not represented on the P&A Consultative Committee or P&A Senate. Professor Konstan said having postdoctoral associates under the SCFA umbrella makes more sense than in P&A governance because P&A are dealing with more long-term employment issues. Professor Lanyon agreed with Professor Konstan that postdocs would not be a good fit for P&A governance because postdocs are more faculty like than P&A employees. Because postdocs turn over quickly it would make sense to have a group of faculty looking out for what is best for them.

Professor Schneider then asked members about the committee's membership, including ex-officio members. The committee agreed that the overall composition of the committee was fine with the exception of the ex-officio members from the Office of Human Resources (OHR) who rarely attend unless they are explicitly invited. Professor Kudrle asked members whether having administrators attend SCFA meetings was a good use of their time. In Professor Konstan's opinion, it is a problem if the person in charge of OHR does not feel it is a good use of his/her time to attend a Senate committee that deals with issues that matter to faculty. He added that when the vice president attended SCFA meetings, the input from members was not always favorable, and the solution seems to have been to remove the opportunity for members to provide this input by not attending. Professor Lanyon said the purpose of faculty governance is for

administrators to attend meetings, and consult with members before initiatives are rolled out; faculty are a resource for the administration. To this point, Professor Luciana noted that the bulk of the topics SCFA discusses have OHR relevance. Vice Provost Levine added that his office and OHR are technically the “academic OHR” of the institution, and it would be useful to hear the OHR perspective on the topics discussed.

Next, Professor Schneider asked whether new members understand what the committee does and if they received adequate information about the committee. To the degree that any new member understands the interworking of a committee they serve on, the new members agreed they understood the charge and received the information they needed to serve.

Professor Lanyon said because there is annual turnover on the committee, and because a number of issues take longer than an academic year to resolve, this poses a challenge. Therefore, he suggested that governance committees in general may want to track the issues they address and next steps. The issues also tend to overlap with other committees or administrative offices. Vice Provost Levine commented that turnover is something that is pervasive across the University and used the example of department heads/chairs turning over every few years. In project management, said Professor Konstan, there is the notion of an issue tracker. The software to do this type of tracking is already being used by the University in other areas. This may be worth exploring further and talking with the chief information officer about it. Professor Ng agreed and said that while committees are good at putting completed reports on their websites they are not good at communicating about issues in progress and their status. She suggested putting unfinished issues/topics on the appropriate Senate committee websites so that people who are interested in an issue could track its progress. Another reason doing something along these lines would be good, said Professor Lanyon, has to do with perspectives people have about governance. People have a tendency to think that as soon as governance gets involved things bog down and nothing ever happens. While this could be true, it might not be true, and so there should be a way to document and track progress that is made. Governance issues should be quantified.

Professor Schneider asked members if SCFA works effectively with other committees on related issues. Professor Lanyon said SCFA has a close working relationship with AF&T. Professor Konstan added that SCFA also has worked with the Senate Research Committee and the Women’s Faculty Cabinet, to avoid duplication of efforts when working on issues of mutual interest, e.g., family-friendly policies.

Professor Schneider opened the floor to other questions/comments about SCFA. Overall members were satisfied with how the committee functions. Professor Grier-Reed agreed with Professor Lanyon’s earlier suggestion about the importance of demonstrating the utility and efficacy of governance. She suggested that advocacy be explicitly included in SCFA’s duties and responsibilities to examine and propose University policies and programs associated with faculty development. In Professor Lanyon’s opinion, it is the committee’s responsibility to advocate for and pay attention to the issues it raises until completion.

Before the discussion ended, Professor Luciana commented that what she really enjoys about SCFA is the breadth of perspectives of its members. There is broad representation on the

committee, and it is interesting to hear how things work in different sectors of the University. To Professor Luciana's point, said Professor Lanyon, ConC has done a good job in identifying a diverse membership.

Professor Schneider said if members have additional comments to share to email her at ingridss@umn.edu or Professor Clarke at bclarke@d.umn.edu; any comments received will remain anonymous.

5. **Adjournment:** Hearing no further business, Professor Lanyon adjourned the meeting.

Renee Dempsey
University Senate